



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0225IN-1 for Goshen Community School Corporation

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	3
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>While the applicant demonstrated that it has made some significant progress around the four core educational assurance areas, the district falls short in articulating a clear vision of a personalized learning environment (PLE) and how it connects to other key reforms in the core areas. For example, the district is in the process of implementing the Indiana Common Core Standards (INCC). Teachers have created learning goals for each course, yet the applicant does not discuss how these could be differentiated for personalized or blended learning for students. In the area of turnaround schools, Goshen Community Schools (GCS) discusses how teachers used a limited personalized learning environment to support instruction. The application could have been strengthened by describing how teachers created these personalized learning environments and if this effort directly led to gains in student achievement.</p> <p>The applicant notes that it will use a PLE and has created a Personalized Learning in A Caring Environment (PLACE) program, yet it does not clearly define what it means by personalized instruction or provide a vision of what it might look like at various grade levels. The district does not provide research or even anecdotal evidence as to why it believes a PLE will meet the needs of its student population and how it will accelerate increases in student achievement. Furthermore, the district does not address why it has selected an investment in computer-based technology as its primary pathway to delivering instruction through a PLE. There is little discussion on how educators will actively engage students in setting goals and excite them about learning other than to give them access to online instruction. As the application is written it appears that adults exist in the periphery of a student's educational environment and not engaged partners in their learning. If students are not highly engaged in their learning, the PLE will likely fail.</p> <p>With a sharper vision of what a PLE means to the community and what it would look like in the classroom, the district would be better poised to move forward in implementing its PLACE project. The district appears to be committed to transitioning from seat-time credits to student mastery of concepts which would be required for effective PLE implementation. As mentioned above, the current implementation of the INCC would be an ideal time to examine how standards-based instruction could be delivered through different modalities and paths.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has elected to serve all schools and students in the district. The schools serve large percentages of students living in poverty ranging from a high of 92.4 percent to a low of 59.9 percent. The applicant submitted the required list of participating schools along with the number of participating and low income students. The district also provided other indicators of high-need status including the percentage of students attending a high minority school (67 percent) and the percentage of students at risk of not graduating on time (63 percent).</p>		

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	3
(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: <p>While the applicant discusses that the district will use the Implementation Science approach to scale up its PLE efforts, it lacks detail how it will achieve its goals. The district's plan does not clearly address what exactly is being implemented in terms of PLEs. The broad goal is "to incorporate personalized learning environments in all GCS's K-12 classrooms". Again, the district does not specifically address what it means by a PLE or what exactly will be implemented. The logic model provides an overarching roadmap on the inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes, but without a clear vision of what the district considers to be a PLE, it is difficult to determine if the proposed plan is feasible. The logic model appears to be a list of resources, activities, and measures, but they are not connected. For example, a major activity is to implement a 1:1 computer ratio at the high school level and a 2:1 ratio at the elementary level. It is not clear how these activities will translate into quantifiable outcome measures. The plan also lacks detail on who will be responsible for scaling up the project.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	2
(A)(4) Reviewer Comments: <p>The district has set goals to increase student achievement, graduation rates, and college enrollment rates for all subgroups. While these targets appear to be achievable, there is concern that they may not be ambitious especially for English learners (EL) and students with disabilities. For example, only 4 percent of EL students are expected to enroll in college in 2011-12; by 2016-17 the district expects only 9 percent of EL students to enroll in college. A similar pattern was found for students with disabilities. The district has higher expectations for increasing the high school graduation rates for all students including EL students and disabilities. However, there is a disconnect between the achievement expectations and high school completion. The district has set fairly low proficiency expectations for all subgroups except White students for 10th grade English proficiency. For example, the district has set a 2016-17 target that 49 percent of Hispanic students will be proficient in 10th grade English, yet two years later 99 percent will graduate from high school. This raises concerns about the rigor of the college- and career-ready programming.</p> <p>The district provided proficiency data by subgroup. In calculating the gaps between subgroups it appears that the district does not intend to dramatically close (or close at all) gaps between the highest and lowest performing groups. For example, in 2011-12 there is a gap of 22 percentage points between White and Hispanic students; this gap remains in 2016-17. The gap between White students and students with disabilities is even more alarming. In 2011-12, there is a 49 percentage point gap between the two groups and that gap remains by 2016-17. It does not appear that the district's approach to PLEs will benefit the students who need the greatest instructional support.</p>		

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	6
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As the applicant notes, GCS has invested in more rigorous high school options such as AP, the IB program and dual credit enrollment. The district has made significant strides in increasing the number of graduates taking and passing AP or IB exams and in its 4 and 5 year graduation rates, outpacing the state on many of these indicators. The district also has seen gains in student proficiency. For example, the percentage of students scoring proficient in 4th grade math increased from 57.4 percent in 2008 to 66 percent in 2012. The district realized even greater gains in 3rd grade English/language arts increasing from 59.5 percent to 75.2 percent. Although the district is seeing an upward trend in achievement, the district still scores below the state on both measures. Furthermore, the district not provide evidence that it has closed gaps between any subgroups on any of the reported measures. 		

- The district appears to have had success in turning around a persistently low performing elementary school. The applicant notes that it restructured the school through its School Improvement Grant. However, significant gaps remain between subgroups. For example the gap between White and Hispanic students in 2011-12 was 44 percentage points which was only 3 percentage points lower than what was for 2008-09.
- The district has made both summative and formative performance data available to teachers and parents through a secure webportal. However, as the applicant notes, parent use is limited because they do not know how to access the site. The other than stating that a parent assistance center will be available to help parents access data, the applicant offers no additional options to make the information more readily available to families and other stakeholders. For example, it is not clear whether the district posts even aggregate school-level data on a public Website in an effort to be transparent and accountable to parents and the community. In a PLE, there should be more creative ways to reach out to families to provide them with information about how their children are performing and their ongoing educational needs.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)**5****1****(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The district indicated that it publishes salary schedules but did not confirm that it published the actual expenditure data as required by the RTT-D notice.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)**10****3****(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant indicated that the State has waived the seat time requirement for awarding high school credit which will allow the district to grant credit based on mastery. This action will pave the way for allowing schools to develop PLEs to help students master content rather than accrue credits by seat time. However, the application does not provide sufficient detail on other State policies or actions that may be required to create conditions conducive to PLEs. For example, it is not clear whether the district has the autonomy to restructure the school day and year both for instruction and educator collaboration or if it can refine the roles of teachers and other support staff to realize the goals of a comprehensive PLE. The application could have been strengthened with a statement confirming the district's level of autonomy to create PLEs.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)**10****7****(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

- The district provided evidence that it involved the education community in a meaningful way in developing its RTT-D proposal. The district created a Core Committee (CC) comprised mainly of central office staff to work collaboratively on the proposal. It is not clear whether school leaders or other personnel were involved with the CC. A broader Community Advisory Committee (CAC) was formed to include stakeholders including parents, teachers, counselors, and community members. The CAC had good representation from teachers in diverse grades and subjects. While these stakeholders were involved in the proposal process, it cannot be determined if they were engaged in a meaningful way. It cannot be determined if members of the CAC contributed to or only reviewed the proposal or if the proposal was modified based on their comments.
- The applicant provided a signed letter of support from the Goshen Education Association.
- The applicant provided letters of support from a range of stakeholders including students, parents, community and business organizations.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)**5****2**

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The district has had limited experience implementing PLEs. Its major effort to date has been investing in technology so that every high school student has a lab or classroom based-computer. The middle and high schools have also been experimenting with an LMS with mixed success. While the applicant identified perceived gaps and needs to implement PLEs it did not in most cases adequately address how these gaps relate directly to PLEs. For example, the application provides a chart demonstrating that a significant percentage of students are not on track to graduate, then identifies the gap as "insufficient resources to meet the academic needs of high-risk students". The district does not indicate why it believes lack of resourcing is the cause of low academic performance and how a PLE would help with resourcing (the grant funds, more cost-effective instruction, etc.). Similarly, the applicant discussed its limited access to highly effective teachers and principals but does not describe what instructional effectiveness might look like in a PLE. The district is investing heavily in computers, but it does not appear to have a clear vision of how technology will support will lead to achievement gains, or if computers are the best technology option. In general, the gaps identified by the district appear to be related to the current educational conditions in GSC and most are not specific to implementing PLEs.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	7

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

While GCS appears to be committed to moving from a traditional learning environment to PLEs, the applicant's plan falls short in its comprehensive support of students. The district appears to be focusing primarily on an investment of computers and laptops to create personalized learning plans for students. Clearly technology can be an important tool to individualize instruction, but a comprehensive and successful PLE needs critical investments in human resources beyond training them to use technology. The plan does not provide adequate detail on how teachers or others will help students navigate, filter, analyze, and make sense the myriad content available through the internet. For example, it is not clear whether the district plans to allow access to sites that have been proven to disseminate high-quality, standards-based resources. With its major focus on self-paced computer instruction, the application does not thoroughly describe how students will master critical academic content and develop skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving through multiple learning pathways.

The applicant indicates that the district's IB program its major commitment to diversity. However, few students take the IB program and it is a secondary program. The district does not describe how it will expose all students to other cultures and how diversity could be integrated into daily lessons and activities.

The applicant discusses several ways in which adults will interact with students to inform their instruction. However, it is not clear if these interventions are a new way of interacting with students or if the district is simply expanding existing structures and resources. For example, the applicant discusses the role of Student Resource Time (STR) teachers who will hold 2, 90 minute sessions per week. During this time students can receive small group academic assistance or participate in afterschool clubs. It is not clear whether students will be required to seek afterschool support, or how well this support is connected to the students' learning plans. It also is not clear who the STR teachers are--regular classroom teachers who receive additional pay (which is included in the budget) or counselors/teachers who are hired specifically for this role. How STR teachers will interact with the students' other teachers and parents is not discussed in enough detail.

As written, it appears that each classroom will have "stations for each modality" and the use of stations will be determined entirely by the students' mastery of content. It is not clear what this would look like in practice. If students physically move from station-to-station based on their content mastery, this approach may have the unintended consequence of sorting and labeling students by ability in a highly visible manner.

It also is not clear if the district has adequate feedback loops for teachers and students. The applicant notes that each secondary student will meet with a counselor once a year. Based on input from parents, teachers, and SRT teachers, the counselor will create the plan of instruction. This model seems counter to a student-centered PLE. One might expect that

the entire team would work together to create a plan and monitor the student's progress throughout the year. Throughout the application, the district notes the importance of data-driven instruction, yet the narrative provides little information how data will be used to help students succeed. The plans does not provide sufficient detail on how teachers will use data to modify instruction or where they can access supports on content, instructional strategies, or lesson planning. Examining data is an important step in identifying students' strengths and weaknesses, but how teachers use these data to inform instruction and learning is even more critical. The role of parents and other communities supports in helping students succeed also is not discussed. The narrative is strong on how the district will use computers in a PLE, but is lacks detail on how adults in the buildings and community will engage students in a meaningful way during the school day and beyond.

The hallmark of a high-quality PLE is that it allows students to advance at their own pace using range of modalities. The applicant does not address how it will ensure that struggling students will meet rigorous content standards and not fall behind grade level expectations because of their pacing. There also is concern that the applicant does not specifically address the unique needs and challenges that EL students and student with disabilities face especially since these students are performing at significantly lower rates than other students in the district.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	9
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district's plan for teaching and leading in an personalized learning environment holds promise. In particular, the district will create an Instructional Development Team to support teachers in transitioning to a PLE. The team will include curriculum developers, assessment experts, IT personnel and professional development professionals. The team could be strengthened with the inclusion of school-based instructional staff such as master and mentor teachers. All teachers in the district will have access to professional supports to help them implement PLEs and access to technology. The implementation plan provides ongoing opportunities for teachers to obtain professional development throughout the school year including personalized support and professional learning communities. Several training opportunities will involve collaborative teams across the district and within schools.

As with other parts of the application, there is not a cohesive, well-articulated vision of what a personalized learning environment means to the district other than the emphasis on increased access to technology. Until this vision is clearly articulated, it will be difficult for the district to determine the PD needs of staff. For example, the district mentions several training opportunities that will be held throughout the year, but does not specify the content to be delivered other than technical support and how to interpret student learning data. The narrative does not discuss the role of instructional coaching, yet the implementation plan includes instructional coaches. Coaches could be an important support not only in content areas but in helping teachers personalize instruction, yet the narrative does not discuss their role in any meaningful detail. There is not a clear picture of what blended instruction will look like at this point or how teachers will be motivated to engage students and connect with parents and the large community.

The applicant notes that the district is implementing the common core and associated assessments, yet there is little discussion on how these reforms will mesh with the PLEs. Often there is tension in schools between meeting national standards and individualized student learning. Schools will still need to ensure that all students are meeting rigorous content standards even if they are pacing their own instruction. The applicant notes that teachers will have access to an online portal, but it is not clear who is identifying quality instructional resources. The applicant also mentions that it will secure the services of a vendor to help teachers and other building-level staff understand PLEs and blended instruction, yet it does not suggest any vendors or their philosophies on PLEs.

Throughout the application, the district notes its use of the Teacher Advancement Program but it does not adequately discuss how TAP will be used or adapted to meet the needs of a PLE. For example, will schools need to modify cluster meetings to be more focused on individual students or will the school day need to be restructured to accommodate greater teacher collaboration across subjects. The transition to a PLE could be a major culture change and may require the district to redefine the qualifications and roles of the master/mentor teachers.

Most of the discussion on teaching and leading focuses on teachers; there is little information given about principals and the roles as transformational leaders. The applicant mentions that educator evaluations will be used to identify learning needs, but does not discuss whether the current evaluation systems are designed to measure the success of a PLE, particularly in terms of the observational components. In reviewing the data in PM6c, most teachers and principals

have been rated as effective. This lack of differentiation suggests that the evaluation data may not provide instructional leaders with sufficient information to identify strengths and weaknesses in a teacher's practice or identify meaningful supports.

The district is taking steps to attempt to recruit and retain teachers in its highest needs schools through professional development incentives and expanded induction and mentoring support. The application does not provide sufficient detail to determine why the district's high-need schools have higher attrition rates or if these interventions are likely to address teacher turnover.

The applicant's response to the teaching and leading section raises a serious issue of how many teachers will actually be implementing PLEs. Throughout the application the district indicates that all student will have PLEs. Yet the implementation plan indicates that only two teachers (volunteers) from each of the secondary schools will be selected to participate in each year of the project. This suggests that all students may have access to computer-based instruction, but only a limited number of student will have more comprehensive PLEs.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	6
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: While the district will reorganize and add staff to its technology department, it does not plan to reorganize the central office to support PLEs. Even if a reorganization is not needed, it would be expected that there would at least need to be formal collaboration between several divisions including instructional units and the technology department. The application did not discuss how the central office would collaborate vertically or horizontally to support PLEs. The application indicates that school leadership teams will have autonomy, but does not describe critical areas of autonomy. It is not clear if schools have the authority over factors such as personnel decisions, school budgets, or school calendars and schedules. The application demonstrates that the district has the authority to issue credit based on content mastery rather than seat time. The district will rely primarily on the International Association for K-12 Online learning's "Competency-Base Pathways" design principles to determine student content mastery. The district appears to be relying on computer assisted instruction to determine content mastery; students may not have access to multiple pathways to demonstrate competence. The application does not describe how learning resources and instructional practices would be adapted and fully accessible to students with disabilities and English learners.		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	3
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: While CGS is clearly committed to expanding and improving technologies to support PLEs, the application did not provide a detailed plan on how it intends to scale up its technology infrastructure. The district's initial plan provides for technical support for teachers and students and the creation of a Parent Assistance Center (PAC). It is not clear if the mission of the PAC will only be to provide technical support to families, or if it will also give support to families to help their children realize their PLE goals. The district plans to use mobile classrooms to provide computer access to students that may not		

own computers, but it is not clear if families will be able to access this technology. The plan does not describe if or how it might leverage state technology initiatives or how the district will make critical decision on what platforms or vendors it will use build its technology infrastructure. The district did not describe how it identified the technology needs of schools, students, teachers and families.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	6
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: <p>GCS will rely primarily on an external evaluator to monitor project processes and outcomes. While external evaluation is a critical component to continuous improvement, it likely will not be adequate to monitor the project on an ongoing basis. Project managers should be given access to real-time data to help them ensure they are on track in meeting their critical milestones and budget projections. Quarterly data reviews may not be adequate to make ongoing project corrections and improvements. The application does not describe the types of measures or indicators that might be important to monitoring overall project progress or what specific data project managers would need to ensure they are on track.</p> <p>In addition to releasing the evaluator's reports, the district should consider making measures of progress on key indicators available to the public throughout the project year.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	2
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: <p>The applicant provided limited information on how it will share changes to its implementation plan with internal and external stakeholders. The district appears to be relying solely on evaluators to communicate with stakeholders on how the project is progressing. There appear to be no plans for district leadership to meet or communicate with the stakeholders that supported the initial application to update them on progress. For example, the application does not discuss how it will keep the teacher association informed of changes to the plan that it signed on to. Given that PLEs have the potential of radically changing how and when teachers teach, it would be advantageous to keep the association well-informed. The district may want to consider additional avenues of communications with key stakeholder groups.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments: <p>The applicant provided the required performance measures although some were lacking the required subgroup reporting (such as the effective teacher and principal data). While the applicant did not specifically address its rationale for selecting performance indicators, it did link them to the project's overall goals. The applicant did not address how it would review and improve measures over time.</p> <p>There is concern about the ambitiousness of several of the measures. For example, the RTT-D reform is intended to ensure that all students are college- and career ready. The district's key secondary indicator on college- and career-readiness (Table 26) projects that after significant RTT-D investments only 59% of CGS 12th students will be on track for college- and career-readiness by 2016-17. Even more disconcerting is that there are significantly lower projections for Hispanic and low income 12th graders (51%) compared to White students (66%). Less than 30% of EL students or students are projected to be college- and career-ready as they enter 12th grade in 2016-17. While the district appears to have set more ambitious targets for improving student achievement, significant gaps between subgroups will continue to exist in 2016-17. The educator effectiveness data are problematic. The applicant reports that all student have access to an effective teacher and principal. This suggests that the district's evaluation system does not sufficiently differentiate educator performance.</p>		

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)**5****1****(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The district provided a table displaying its performance measures, annual targets, timeframe, type of analysis it would conduct for each. However, the applicant did not discuss how these measures would be used for continuous improvement.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)**(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)****Available****Score****10****7****(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The district's budget in line with its proposal to implement computer-based PLEs, although there are concerns with several budgeting priorities. The budget seeks a significant one-time investments in technology (hardware) and supports for data integration. A major portion of the budget will be used to support professional development for educators in how to use technology and to understand data-driven instruction. There is concern about the district's long-term commitment to the RTT-D project given that it only secured 4% of the funding from other sources. The applicant does not address how it will support the new positions and professional development once the grant ends. While the RTT-D grant would provide an infusion of funds for new technologies, they quickly become outdated. The district did not present a plan for continued technology investments beyond the grant period.

The district is requesting approximately \$3 million for a mobile classroom. While this will provide technology access to families who may not own computers, it is not clear why this expense is needed if the district will be issuing laptops to students. As currently described, the mobile classroom's major focus will be to provide computer access and not teacher-driven instruction. The district is requesting \$2.4 million for laptops for middle and high school students. However, it appears that middle school students will not be able to take the laptops home. Elementary students will not have access to laptops. Perhaps it would be more cost effective to issue tablets or netbooks to all students rather than run the mobile lab and give students laptops on a limited basis. Since the district is relying on computers as its major PLE pathway, it should consider alternative solutions to give students direct computer access beyond the school day especially as it phases out printed textbooks.

The district is requesting funds to create Career Readiness lab. It is not clear why the district selected this approach or what career skills students will obtain. The implementation plan suggests that students will create print materials for schools. The district does not indicate that there is a large demand for these skills in the community. However, the district may be using the lab to create a work-like environment so that students gain general career-ready skills that would translate into any field. There seems to be a disconnect that the district is focusing so heavily on technology in the PLEs, then preparing students for a career in the printing industry.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)**10****3****(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant did not provide a cohesive or high quality plan for sustainability. As mentioned above, the district has secured additional funds of approximately 4% to support the RTT-D initiative which raise concerns about the district's commitment to the effort. The district notes that the Horizon Alliance is seeking funds to support PLACE, but it does not address the specific resourcing needs. The district suggests that training efforts can be reduced after the majority of teachers are trained in PLEs but did not provide cost estimates for this reduction.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	8
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: <p>GCS has presented a strong plan that engages the community in helping the district establish the Parent Assistance Center described in its application. Family engagement is one of the district's key components of success in implementing PLEs. The partnership will work in concert to support the educational, social, and emotional needs of students and their families. The district is building on its assessment of community needs and clearly details which organizations will provide support in each area. The application provides a coherent connection between identifying the needs of students and how they would be supported through community-based services. GCS provided data and targets aligned with each support area and identified achievable performance measures.</p>		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments: <p>While the applicant demonstrated that it has made some significant progress around the four core educational assurance areas, the district's application falls short in articulating a clear and cohesive vision of a personalized learning environment (PLE) and how it connects to other key reforms in the core areas. The district appears to be relying on technology as its primary method for individualized instruction. There is little discussion on how educators and counselors will work together and with students to engage learning. As written, it appears that the district is moving from a teacher centered to a computer centered environment--not to a student centered environment. The plan also does not appear to provide students with access to range of tools and supports beyond computerized instructional strategies.</p> <p>In addition to the lack of vision, the district's application does not provide a high-quality implementation plan and several of the projects appear to be disconnected from its vision. For example, the district is requesting funds for a printing lab and mobile classroom, yet these projects are barely or tangentially mentioned in the application. The district does not adequately connect these expenditures to its overall mission of transitioning to PLEs. The district also is proposing to make significant investments in professional supports, however most the the training appears to be focused on how to use technology rather than how to authentically implement a comprehensive PLE that engages students through multiple pathways. The district did not provide a coherent plan on how it would manage the grant in terms of monitoring project budgets, milestones, and outcomes.</p> <p>The application mentions additional learning time for students but these extra sessions appear to be voluntary and disconnected from the students' learning plans. It is not clear how adults in the building will collaborate in a meaningful way to meet the needs of all students. For example, there is little discussion on how or if the SRT time teacher will collaborate with other instructional teachers and leaders to discuss student needs and progress. The plan to engage parents in their children's learning was weak and did not appear to go beyond teaching them how to use technology.</p> <p>The application did not adequately address how it would leverage other reforms, such as the implementation of CCRS to move the district to a personalized learning environment. In terms of teaching and leading, the district notes that is using the TAP model but fails to indicate if or how the model will need to be adapted for a PLE. The district did not discuss the role of principals as transformational leaders or what supports they would need to move their buildings to PLEs. As noted above, there is concern about the number of educators and students who will be actively participating in PLEs. Finally, the application is largely silent on how educators will assess the needs of and provide strategies to help high-need students such as those with disabilities or who are EL achieve and become college- and career-ready which is disappointing since these students are not succeeding in GCS's currently learning environment.</p>		

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Total	210	91
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	10

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has submitted an optional budget to support improved parental engagement in early learning through music. The application presented research demonstrating that early engagement leads to better educational and social outcomes for students later in life. The narrative also provides some data on the importance of music for young children's cognitive, language, physical, and socio-economic development. While the research-base is small on the effects of music on later learning, this would be a worthy project to fund to see if the grant will realize positive results overtime that could be scaled beyond the participating districts. The applicant has set clear goals on how it would measure implementation and participation. The applicant also plans to analyze indicators of kindergarten readiness in by examining DIBELS scores; however, it is not clear if the researchers plan to use a control group to determine if children participating in the program outperform children who do not.



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0225IN-2 for Goshen Community School Corporation

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	9

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant will incorporate personalized learning environments in all k-12 classrooms utilizing a four year integration plan. Their phase in implementation plan will promote educator buy in and sustainability. The applicant will incorporate the Common Core Standards into their plan, utilizing college and career readiness strategies. The district has an assessment system in place and is accustomed to utilizing data for instructional decisions.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The table clearly articulates the list of schools and the participants from each demographic area. The process clarifies consistency across the district and incorporates all k-12 schools. The process is scaffolded to role out math the first year and adding additional subject areas in subsequent years. This process promotes sustainability.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	7
(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: The applicants plan is clearly articulated and presented in a logic model. The goals are clear and described in detail. The model supports improvement of student learning and includes short-term, intermediate, and long-term goals. The model is focused on all district k-12 students. The district lacks clarity on improving student learning for English Language Learners and student with disabilities.		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	6
(A)(4) Reviewer Comments: The applicant articulates realistic and achievable goals in each of the required areas. However, alignment to their vision is not clear. The College enrollment rate goals for English Language Learners and students with disabilities is set considerably low. The district needs to plan a vision to increase achievement for these diverse students so they are prepared for post secondary education.		

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	11
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: The applicant provided data that shows positive trends in closing achievement gaps over a four year time period. Through professional development and whole school reform for their lowest achieving school, they have made significant gains in most areas. However, this school is still struggling to increase student achievement for their 4th grade English students and special education English students. The applicant has a process in place for parents, educators, and students to obtain instant data on students, however not all parents are utilizing this data base due to lack of understanding. Professional development for parents can be provided to aid parents in understanding the data.		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: The applicant encompasses a high level of transparency in areas A and C, by providing this information to the public through the district website. However, they do not report on school level expenditures. It is unclear how actual personnel salaries are available to the public.		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	2
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: The applicant provides information for high school implementation of personalized learning environments. The district is implementing personalized learning environments in all k-12 schools. There is insufficient information detailing requirements for all grades.		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	8
(B)(4) Reviewer Comments: The applicant was thorough in collaborating with appropriate stakeholders to develop their proposal. Two separate committees were established to gather a wide range of input. Letter of support are included from community members. Information on how stakeholder input and feedback was utilized to improve the proposal was not provided.		

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	5
(B)(5) Reviewer Comments: <p>The applicant articulated their familiarity in incorporating PLEs into their district. Even though they struggle with elementary implementation, steps have been taken to individualize instruction for students. Technology has been a big part of their beginning implementation success thus far. The district identified needs and gaps utilizing district and school level data.</p>		

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	14
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: <p>Having support structures in place in addition to high quality classroom instruction to promote graduate and college and career readiness have been a top priority in this district. The applicant will utilize and enhance current resources and structures that are place to support students to graduate and be college and career ready. Professional development will be provided district wide to support teachers, students, parents, and staff in implementation of new technology and assessments. Curriculum will be aligned to Indiana's Common Core Standards and professional development will be provided for successful implementation of best practices.</p> <p>District has been in the process of switching to a student centered approach to teaching and learning. However, there is a heavy focus on tools and resources for middle and high school students. The district will need to also have a plan for college and career readiness support in grades k-5. Even though there is mention of teachers providing individualized instruction based on data and student need, a solid plan that details steps for elementary implementation is not evident.</p> <p>The applicant will need to plan for increasing student achievement for English Language Learners and students with disabilities. The plan lacks detail as to how these groups will be successful utilizing the tools and resources described.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	16
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: <p>The applicant has provided a clear plan that outlines attainable goals over a 4 year implementation process. They have articulated how they will meet the needs of teachers who continue to struggle. There is a plan in place for job imbedded and ongoing professional development to support teachers. There is a plan to develop master level teachers who can mentor others, this will promote sustainability. The district has support entities and personnel established to provide consistent professional development based on teacher and principal need. This plan will encompass all schools district wide. The plan is not clear as to how the applicant will develop teachers and leaders to increase student achievement for diverse students and English Language Learners.</p>		

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	12
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: <p>The applicant has infrastructures currently in place that lay the foundation for project implementation. They currently have school and district leadership teams in place. The district will increase central office staff to support schools and the district in critical areas such as technology and assessment. The district is committed to moving to a method of achieving academic credit based on demonstrated mastery of content. However, the applicant lacks detail in describing their plan in providing sufficient flexibility, and autonomy over schedules, calendars, school personnel, staffing models, and school level</p>		

budgets. For example, the plan could include the use of subs to free up instructional teams to review data. The application lacks detail in how they plan to provide resources and instructional practices for students with disabilities and English learners.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)

10

8

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant clearly describes their plan in supporting students, teachers, and parents in accessing student data, coursework, and technical support. However, support for English Language Learners and students with disabilities is not evident. Additionally, there is lack of clarity of a plan for intervention for students and parents who are not successful utilizing the new technology tools and resources.

The Parent Assistance Center will be responsible for educating parents of to access and utilize their student's data, in addition to reading reports with understanding. This is critical in the implementation of this new comprehensive system. The system will streamline current initiatives to provide reporting to parents, teachers, and students with ease and accessibility.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	13
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: <p>The applicant will utilize professional external evaluators to provide feedback regarding grant implementation and program improvement. The external evaluator will conduct process evaluation, treatment evaluation, and outcome evaluation. The applicant will establish a leadership committee to review data and make recommendations for program improvement. The district will take specific measures to ensure essential programmatic data is shared with the public through specific venues.</p> <p>The application lacks clarity regarding a plan to provide continuous improvements for diverse students and students with disabilities. It is unclear as to how educators will be reviewing data to make instructional decisions for these students.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: <p>The applicant has established a detailed plan for ongoing communication and engagement. There are processes in place to maintain a continuous improvement cycle with internal and external stakeholders.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments: <p>The applicant provides a chart displaying essential performance measure and their descriptions. However, the application does not detail how the measure will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to its proposed plan and theory of action regarding the applicant's implementation success or areas of concern; and How it will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5
(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:		

The applicant's table describes a timeframe to when each evaluation and analysis of data sets will be reviewed for program improvement. The table includes district funded activities as well as essential grant activities.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: The applicant provided clear descriptions of all the funds that the applicant will use to support grant implementation. The budget identifies one-time versus ongoing operational costs. The budget was clear and intentions are easy to interpret. The budget lacks clarity as to how funds will be utilized to support diverse students and students with disabilities.		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	8
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: The applicant has provided letters indicating Indiana Department of Education and local government support of the program. There is a plan in place for the department of education to continue to provide needed programmatic funding after the 4 years grant period. Local communicate partners currently fund many of the entities that will be a integral part of the program. This flow of funding will continue to support these entities such as the family assistance center. There is a plan in place for funding after the grant ends, but a budget is not provided.		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	7
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: The applicant has extensively detailed community resources currently in place that support students and families. There is a history of ongoing support provided by the parent assistance center which is funded through the community. The applicant details clear goals in increasing student, parent, and community engagement. The application does not detail how these efforts will impact English Language Learners, students of poverty, or students with special needs. These are critical demographics that will need to be specifically attended to.		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments: The applicant has detailed a clear plan as to how they will implement the grant to increase student achievement. There are clear intentions of ongoing professional development and job embedded professional development. Plans for sustainability financially and academically are in place. The district details the utilization of program funds to put processes in place that will have a positive effect on teachers, students, parents, and administrators.		

Total	210	159
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	13

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

The optional budget priority will enable the district to implement a program starting from birth. The funds will be utilized to begin educating parents to be proactive in the development of their child. The applicant has described the purpose and rational for these initiatives. There is lack of clarity as to how the district will encourage parents to participate in this program on a continuing basis to promote sustainability.



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0225IN-3 for Goshen Community School Corporation

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	7
(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: Application provides a coherent plan for linking the concept of personalized learning environments with standards with an expanded method for collecting and tracking data; multiple formats for increasing student learning are endorsed, but not defined in detail.		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	7
(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: The application indicates that all schools will participate; schools are listed and information on school demographics is provided in tabular form to cite both numbers and percentages of students in low-income and high-need categories.		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	8
(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: Applicant provides a high-quality plan to improve student achievement through the use of responsive technology to develop personal educational plans, professional development for educators and administration, inclusion of multiple constituencies, partnership with additional organizations, and replicability of its model.		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	6

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Application provides baseline data as a measure for anticipated gains overall and within selected groups. It is unclear what F/R designates in the application. Additionally, students of African American/Black descent do not appear to be listed separately.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	10
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: <p>Applicant cites that they operate the "International Bachelorette". It is unclear whether or not the International Baccalaureate is offered. (Folake: you wrote Baccalaueate, but I think you mean baccalaureate.) Additional editing might offer clarification.</p> <p>Reference is made to Chandler's "restricting design". It appears that the applicant may mean "restructuring design". Additional editing might clarify.</p> <p>Gains are reported to support a track record of success for higher participation and test scores IB and AP courses.</p> <p>Goshen High School is reported to exceed or come close to state rates of student achievement.</p> <p>The applicant has stated in an earlier section that a priority for the district is to increase timely access for educators and families regarding student performance data from its current status.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: <p>The applicant provides information regarding how information is made available to the public consistent with the Access to Public Records Act of Indiana regarding salaries.</p> <p>Expenditures at the school level for non-personnel items are only available through searching minutes of school board meetings. These minutes are limited to citing such expenses for the most recent two-week period. There does not appear to be a comprehensive method for accessing this information at the present time.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	6
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: <p>The applicant cites an existing state waiver of "seat time", indicating that schools may now award credit for proficiency.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	6
(B)(4) Reviewer Comments: <p>Two advisory groups were established to inform the development of the proposal including a broad base of educators, administrators, families and other community constituencies. Letters of support from the teachers' union and other organizations have been provided.</p> <p>Feedback is noted, however little detail regarding how revisions may have taken place is provided.</p>		

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	4
(B)(5) Reviewer Comments: <p>The current status of attempts to provide personalized learning environments is offered, including perceived gaps at various educational levels as well as tabular data regarding poor academic performances in school year 2011-12.</p> <p>The district has used the TAP program to identify effective and ineffective teachers, which is cited as having significantly improved the district's ability to disaggregate them. However, TAP does not provide information about which students are being taught by specific teachers. The district would move toward correcting this shortfall in data collection in the future.</p> <p>Current inventories of hardware for technology-assisted instruction are perceived as inadequate as the district transitions from the use of textbooks to computers; additional hardware would support personalized learning environments.</p>		

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	12
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: <p>The applicant cites a multi-pronged plan to provide students with both counseling and Student Resource Time during which students will meet for small group assistance and career portfolio review.</p> <p>Additional technology resources are seen as promoting problem-solving and application to real-life situations, as well as offering students the opportunity to take online courses not offered at their high school.</p> <p>The importance of formative assessment is supported in personalizing the learning environment. Included forms of assessment relate to student achievement as well as learning style and interests. A plan for developing continual analysis of student achievement, both formative and summative, is presented.</p> <p>The applicant cites a highly diverse student body that will support the concept of access and exposure to cultural perspectives.</p> <p>Continual access to formative and summative information is seen as a way to identify skills and needs, as well as providing a platform for personalizing educational approaches and consistent feedback.</p> <p>Students will receive instruction on using the systems and tools, under the guidance of classroom teachers.</p> <p>The majority of strategies to be implemented appear to relate primarily to high school students.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	14
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: <p>The applicant offers a plan to provide intensive and ongoing professional development to teachers regarding the implementation of personalized learning environments. Included in this professional development will be an emphasis on delivering and interpreting formative assessment and designing instruction to match.</p> <p>Teachers will be encouraged to use multiple grouping protocols to develop a student-centered approach to learning.</p>		

A robust assessment system is planned to give both formative and summative information regarding both student achievement and educator effectiveness.

Limited information is provided regarding interventions, as needed, for teacher and principal effectiveness.

The applicant cites an instructional development team that will assist in the training of teachers to use the platform that will include assessment, suggested content and delivery methods consistent with Common Core State Standards.

The applicant cites an evaluation system that will differentiate between effective and ineffective practice by district educators and leaders.

Teachers and administrators have a plan for weekly meetings to share concerns and best practices.

Workshops are planned to identify what is working and what needs improvement so that student achievement can be maximized.

The applicant has a plan to offer increased incentives and professional development and support for teachers in hard to staff schools. Math is cited as the area of greatest need and greatest response.

Limited information regarding special education is provided.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	11
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: Reorganization of the technology department at the central office is cited to provide technology support and easier access to student data for teachers. No information is provided regarding the LEA central office in general. Several types of school leadership teams are planned with sufficient autonomy to make important choices, but with appropriate accountability. The applicant cites the commitment to move away from traditional Carnegie-unit accounting to a mastery protocol for awarding credit to students using competency-based principles. Applicant provides a plan to offer extended days, summer workdays, and mobile classrooms to increase access. Information regarding English learners and students with disabilities is not provided.		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: The applicant cites development of an integrated assessment and learning management system that will be available to all constituents through a simple login process. A new Student Information System is planned to interface with other platforms. The applicant provides a plan to provide ongoing training for teachers and administrators as first responders to student technology questions, including a help desk and walk-in lab. A Parent Assistance Center is planned to offer support to families.		

Technology specialists hired for the project will make exporting data to desired platforms a priority.

A commitment is expressed to create a data warehouse approach that will operate with the schools' framework of student information to avoid confusion; the system will provide easy but protected access by families as well.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	13
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: <p>The applicant provides a plan in which evaluation will occur on a regular basis in cyclic form so that successes and challenges are articulated and addressed through action plans, followed by additional evaluation, and so on.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: <p>A stated goal is to provide training on data-driven decision making so that successful methodologies can be replicated. Meeting with families and community partners are planned.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments: <p>The applicant refers to baseline data and proposed outcomes, citing data sources for each category. Little detail is provided regarding how improvement will be planned if measures are deemed insufficient.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5
(E)(4) Reviewer Comments: <p>Applicant provides comprehensive information regarding goals, analysis of successful implementation, and end-users of effective investments.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	7
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: <p>Applicant provides comprehensive information regarding goals, analysis of successful implementation, and end-users of effective investments.</p> <p>Funds for one-time expenditures are identified as well as recurring expenditures. Clear planning is evident in plans for disbursement of funds.</p> <p>Funds from other sources are identified.</p>		

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	8
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: <p>Applicant provides support from the state and local level.</p> <p>Applicant points out that the major expense will be in the first years of the grant period during which new technology, hardware and infrastructure would be acquired.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	7
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: <p>The applicant describes partnerships with public and private entities to serve the needs of participating families. Services of each are delineated.</p> <p>Applicant describes sustainable partnerships with multiple organizations supporting a range of services to students and families.</p> <p>Applicant describes performance indicators and sources of data.</p> <p>Tracking is defined in terms of percentage annual increases in desired results by data source.</p> <p>Applicant cites a continuous improvement model. Plans regarding specific challenges is not provided.</p> <p>The applicant cites a plan to share the model with an existing consortium as well as a cooperative of LEAs.</p> <p>Tabular information is referred to, to identify the alignment of the partnership's goals with the needs of students.</p>		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments: <p>The applicant provides a comprehensive proposal with appropriate assessments and plans for responsive modification to data collected at intervals. A system of tracking and planning based on measured student achievement and measured educator effectiveness is proposed as a strategy for personalizing the learning environment, improving instruction and student access to effective educators, and helping students to become college and career ready.</p>		

Total	210	150
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	5

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

- The application, if not funded, may not adversely affect the main proposal.
- A rationale is provided for providing movement education to promote parent/child bonding and a beneficial effect on cognition and Kindergarten readiness of preK children.
- The plan would involve two additional LEAs.
- The proposed budget appears sufficient and reasonable.
- A plan for collecting and analyzing data regarding parent engagement and Kindergarten readiness is described.
- The proposal is based on a hypothesis of increased school readiness and a plan for developing and validating a measure to assess this. Results are speculative at this point.